

Tasks Related to Development of Wetland Water Quality Standards Under EPA Grant – awarded late 2011

Task #	Task Title and objective(s)	Task Description	Output	Time frame
1	Establish Wetlands Water Quality Standards Advisory Subcommittee under WQSAC - Broad-based input and support for developing NH water quality standards for wetlands, applying those standards within existing regulatory programs, and use of selected assessment methods.	Establish a Wetlands Water Quality Standards Advisory Subcommittee (WWQSSC) to advise NHDES, under the existing Water Quality Standards Advisory Committee. Include representatives from local, state, federal, and private business/ environmental organizations. NHDES will consult with the WWQSSC on research, preparation, and review of the draft plan for developing NH water quality standards for wetlands.	Establish Subcommittee and hold meetings/consultations	10/1/11 to 3/1/12 4/1/12 to 9/30/13
2	Research Wetland Water Quality Standards - Understand options for adopting water quality standards for wetlands. - Water quality standards to support improved assessment for condition, restoration, and protection of wetlands.	Review available materials from EPA (e.g., Jon Kusler reports) and details of other state wetland standards, 305(b)/303(d) reports and consolidated assessment and listing methodologies and other states use Level 1 and 2 assessments. Evaluate options in light of existing NH wetland and water quality laws and regulations. Review existing wetlands assessment data (DES, NHB, others) and new data (Task 4) to determine data needs to develop water quality standards. Discuss with WWQSSC.	Summary evaluation of other state approaches and options, NH Laws, regulations and data. Recommendations for defining water quality standards for wetlands in NH.	1/1/12 to 1/1/13
3	Develop Protocols for State Wetland GIS Coverage - Improved base wetlands GIS coverage. - More accurate wetland assessment. - More defensible permitting decisions. - Better land use planning (by DES and others).	Work with the WWQSSC and others to survey the type (e.g., field delineations or aerial photo interpretations, permit applications, town mapping, regional projects), extent, accuracy, and utility of available data sources. Develop protocols for regular updates of the state wetland GIS coverage, which is currently limited to the NWI and is useful only at a broader planning level, and distribution of the updated coverage through GRANIT, the NH GIS data exchange system.	Protocols for updating the state wetlands GIS coverage with more accurate data. Identify types and extent of potential sources of more accurate wetlands mapped data.	3/1/12 to 5/30/12 survey 1/31/13 propose protocols
4	Comparative Evaluation of Alternative Assessment Methods - Improved understanding of assessment methods for permit reviews, restoration/mitigation, protection standards, and section 305(b) assessments. - Improved understanding of the relative results of applying different methods (e.g., what score = “high quality” wetland resource; what is missed by each method).	With partners, review and compare alternative assessment methods such as the revised NH Method, the Floristic Quality Assessment Index (NEIWPCC), USA RAM, and EIA 2.5 approach adapted by NHB. Develop a sampling plan and QAPP to apply selected methods to sites previously analyzed by NHB using EIA 2.5. Evaluate strengths, weaknesses, resources required, results, current uses by other states, and potential applications for NH program activities.	Evaluation report of Wetland Assessment Methods with Recommendations for Possible Applications	10/1/11 to 1/30/13
5	Analyze Information Gathered and Prepare Plan to Develop Water Quality Standards	Based on the results of Tasks 1 - 4, and working with the WWQSSC, analyze all the information gathered and prepare a plan to develop water quality standards for wetlands. Provide a recommended approach for water quality standards and identify next steps and proposed timeline to (a) collect additional assessment data, if needed, (b) work with the NH Water Quality Standards Advisory Committee to further define/refine proposed standards, (c) identify and/or implement accompanying changes to NH statutes and regulations and (d) revise the 305(b) water quality assessments for wetlands for the new standards.	Plan to establish WQ Standards for Wetlands in NH	1/1/13 to 5/31/13 draft plan to WQSSC Final to EPA: 9/30/13